Pork
Beans

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# Lee and Lillie Goodman A Mystery Gathering

A Real Photo Postcard (RPPC) on Velox paper with diamond-corner stamp box, c. 1915–1919

## Reflections

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This photograph was likely taken between 1915 and 1919, most likely near Elkton, Yoncalla, or perhaps Roseburg, Oregon. In the front row on the left sits Lee Cleveland Goodman (1884–1933), and next to him is Lillie Smith Goodman, my grandmother Blanche Toner Dear's aunt.

The exact date is uncertain. The clothing suggests the mid-to-late 1910s, but the postcard backing adds an important clue. The stamp box reads VELOX with diamonds in each of the four corners, a design used roughly between 1907 and 1914. That date reflects when the photographic paper was manufactured, not necessarily when the picture itself was taken. Cards like this might have been used fairly quickly or held onto for some time before being printed upon. Still, it anchors the photograph in the right era—when Lee and Lillie were already in each other's lives and approaching their marriage in 1919.

The possibility remains that this was a wedding celebration. The couple appear slightly better dressed than the others, an older man at the center could have been a justice of the peace, and the rifle nearby might have signified precaution or authority. Most striking, one of the men—seated with a cigar in his mouth—holds a large bottle between the heads of two women at the center of the group. Its bold "O" label stands out, a fitting prop for a day of raised glasses and ritual. Yet, there are contradictions: if this was their wedding day, why do Lee and Lillie sit apart? The setting feels less ceremonial, more like a rough picnic in the woods.

What deepens the mystery is how the story was carried forward—or not carried at all. My grandmother, born in 1909, would have been ten years old when this was taken. By the time she reached her sixties and seventies, when I asked about these photos, her recollections had softened. She remembered that Lee and Lillie were first cousins, and that they had no children. Beyond that, little was spoken. At the turn of the century, cousin marriages were still legally permitted in many states and not considered unusual in rural communities. But attitudes shifted over time, and by my grandmother's generation it had become a quieter

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subject, something less often discussed. This photograph, whether or not it marks their wedding day, may be one of the few surviving witnesses to that silence.

The details on the ground speak of planning and improvisation both: bread, tins, and a can of *Van Camp's Pork and Beans* beside a frying pan that suggests a fire nearby. A picnic basket lies open, and sticks have been laid like a makeshift table. Someone carried a heavy camera to the spot, set the shutter string, and brought this moment into being. Around them the men smoke—cigars, a pipe, a drink in hand—while the rifle lingers as a reminder that leisure and grit went hand in hand.

And then, on the far right, perched on a stump, is Janus the Two-Faced Dog. A slight movement during the exposure left it looking both forward and aside. By chance, it became a perfect symbol for the photograph itself: a threshold image, like Janus, linking past to present and carrying family memory forward a century later.

The truth of the day may never be known—picnic or wedding, celebration or ordinary gathering. What remains is this layered scene: beans, bread, whiskey, cigars, an older man at the center, a rifle close at hand, and Janus watching over it all. A mystery photo, caught between the ordinary and the unforgettable.

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POST CARD

VELOX PLACE STAMP HERE VELOX

CORRESPONDENCE HERE

NAME AND ADDRESS HERE

#2 Lille Goodman
#1 her husband
Grand mas